1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

which he hopes are less important. Furthermore, as in any bureaucracy, standards and their enforcement change through time, often as a result of changing personnel at the top. A new council member may have become interested in school latrines and suddenly start forcing compliance with the rules about such things. Failure to do so or to hear about the stringency with which the old previously unimportant policies are now being enforced could bring trouble to the district head who failed to comply. This is why information about policy and the cultivation of powerful friends in the central government is so important for the district head.

Before leaving the rural area a word should be said about adjudication. All leaders in the Bornu political system adjudicate disputes, and the political hierarchy itself serves as an appeals court system. Thus a peasant can take his dispute with a neighbor to his bullama (hamlet or ward head), who may decide to take the case up to the lawan (village area head), who in turn may decide to take the case to the district head. The district head may further decide to send the case over to the district court, and, if necessary, the district court can send the case into the capital city, to the court of the chief alkali of Bornu (chief judge's court). People can go directly to the judge's or district court, and in the city many do. Even with very serious cases like murder which must go into the central court in the city, the people taking the murderer into the city court most often go up the political hierarchy reporting the case each time they see another official even though there is no adjudication, thus giving recognition to their political leaders rather than going directly to a higher court.

Cases are tried by a combination of Muslim law and local custom. The chief or judge listens to the case, and if three witnesses swear for one side in a dispute but not the other, then the side whose witness has sworn wins the case. If no one swears evidence or too many people swear on both sides, then the judge listens while his assistant in the court interrogates the parties involved. The judge, whoever he may be, then makes a decision. Very often the interrogation itself tends to move the evidence towards one side in a dispute or another. Usually if a crowd gathers, one can see by simply listening to the crowd which side of the court case is winning the argument. On the whole decisions are just unless there have been previous and difficult relations between the adjudicator and any of the parties concerned. Swearing evidence in a court is called "eating the Koran"; that is to say, a person must swear on the holy book. If he tells a lie, it is believed that his hand will shrivel and he will die of horrible diseases. This belief is widespread and it is genuinely feared that the traditionally implied consequences of lying in court are in fact quite true.

The Organization at the Center

In Maiduguri at the eastern end of the royal plaza is the palace of the Shehu, flanked on one side by the mosque and on the other by the official residence of the Waziri or chief minister of the emirate. The Shehu is the formal head of government. All measures, policies, appointments, made within the state are in his name; titles are granted at official investiture ceremonies carried on in the royal palace and he is the formal leader of the religious community of the state. This is em-

586 779 681 of sixty bowls of millet. If he pays the fine they may resume living together as a married couple; if he does not pay, living together is haram (forbidden), equivalent to living with one's mother as one's wife. If, in the course of a quarrel, the husband calls his wife "Yanyi", he must pay the fine or the marriage is dissolved.

586 779 [692] It would seem that the husband's abilities to dissolve a marriage are much greater than those of his spouse. The wife, however, has many ways open to her for bringing about a divorce, and, as was noted above, the law protects her rights. If the wife merely dislikes her husband and wants a divorce from him, he may refuse unless she pays him a sum of money. Since the husband loses the luwaliram when he divorces his wife, he will demand that she return the luwaliram to him (and some times more in addition), if it is she who wishes to bring about an end to the marriage. Amicable divorces of this type, where it is the wife who seeks to initiate the divorce, are brought about by an agreement concerning the luwaliram payment. Should the husband refuse to divorce his wife, she may take to disobeying him, and cease to prepare his meals. In that case he may take her to court, and unless she has a reasonable claim against her husband (for example, that he beats her), the court will order her to swear on the Koran that she will behave properly in the future. Oaths taken on the Koran are thought of in very serious terms, and are not lightly broken. It is thought that a wife who has sworn on the Koran and who breaks her oath will die for swearing falsely.

586 779 626 695 [784]

425 671 land is sufficiently old so that he can sell the land if he wishes to. If a man works a piece of land for a long time (for ten years, for example) he can sell it. But in a recent legal 425 • 695 case a policeman who worked in Geidam was given land by the Lowan. After a year he left Geidam for Maiduguri and sold the land. The Alkali ruled that he had not had the land for a sufficiently long period of time to enable him to sell it, and forced him to return the sum of money which was paid to him by the new owner.

241 565 592 Land is farmed under a variety of conditions. Talaka farm the land themselves with the help of wives and children. A wealthy man, however, may take a very large section of farm land from the Lowan, which he will not work personally. Instead the members of his household, his many tata njima, farm his land for him. His tata njima work on the farm of the household head [465] because this is one of their duties. They receive no payment 241 in the form of a share of the crops for their labor. Some 565 wealthy men may not have very large households of their own, and 464 [178] may hire day laborers to work for them. This, too, is a new ap- 241 proach to labor for the Kanuri. A man with a very large farm 427 who does not intend to use all of his land himself can rent out sections, particularly if his land is in a very favorable location. The renter pays a fixed sum to the owner, and the crops belong entirely to him. No form of share-cropping is practiced. 241 The Ajia of Geidam has huge sections of land alloted to him. 634 [423] Any of his people, his slaves, his kabuna or others attached to

583 only been married two months and had received no use of his capital out-
593 lay, therefore he would only give the girl back if his total marriage
602 expenses were returned. He calculated the amount to be twice the bride-
586 wealth. The judge ruled that since he had only slapped the girl a few
[695] times there were no grounds to the charge of mistreatment and the husband should take the young girl to the city with him and try to straighten out his marriage difficulties.

The girl's family then told her to go to the city but not play the role of dutiful wife. Her luwali bragged publicly that she would be returned quite willingly by the husband inside of a week (it was actually three weeks before the girl did return). That is to say, it was predicted by the luwali that the husband would break up the marriage and send the girl out of his house, thereby forfeiting the bride-wealth. Once in the city the girl cooked badly, quarrelled with her co-wife, emptied the poor man's prayer pot when she needed water, and in a hundred little ways made his life miserable. However, she committed no one great offence which the husband felt he could legally get hold of as a respectable person.(1)

In the end, he lost his temper and told her to get out and go back to her family. Before doing so, he recounts how he first gave her a sound beating in order to get at least that much satisfaction from such a material loss in his investment; for in sending her home he was breaking up the marriage and thereby forfeited the bridewealth.

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It will be noticed in the above example that the independent

[691] (1) The range of complaints for which people will seek adjudication varies
[184] with socio-economic and rural/urban status. It is an upper class norm to keep most marital problems private unless it is absolutely necessary to go to court, while in the hamlets a woman was observed who, with her agnatic kin as supporters, brought her husband to court for having had sexual intercourse too frequently and wanted the judge to limit his advances by a ruling of the court.